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ABSTRACT

Questionnaire surveys and resume ratings of 107 women school administrators, 75 of whom attended workshops for women administrators given by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), tested the effects of the AASA training and of personal and professional characteristics, job-seeking strategies, and internal and external barriers on the women's upward career mobility. The administrators were surveyed during the workshops and four years later. Data were gathered on age, ethnicity, marital status, children, present position, educational background, job experiences and skills, future aspirations, reference letters, clarity of resume expression, opportunities to make presentations, barriers encountered, and strategies used to overcome barriers. Analysis using descriptive statistics, t-tests, and regression indicates that the AASA training decreased trainees' external barriers (such as lack of sponsors) but also led 22 percent of the trainees to switch out of school administration. It was also found that clarity of expression and job experience were related to career growth and that women with good reference letters and fewer internal barriers tended to become superintendents. The authors recommend further support from AASA and similar organizations for women administrators and provision of training to women just starting in education. (RW)

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STRATEGIES AND OTHER PREDICTORS FOR THE UPWARD CAREER MOBILITY OF WOMEN IN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Paper presented
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by

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STRATEGIES AND OTHER PREDICTORS FOR THE UPWARD CAREER MOBILITY OF WOMEN IN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

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The literature on women's equity spells the message clearly; qualified women are abundant in the work force, but there is hardly any room at the top. It almost seems trite to repeat the statistics which show that women are grossly underrepresented in administrative or management level positions. It is more ironic to note that in the elementary school system women predominate as classroom teachers nationwide (85%), yet hold only 20 percent of elementary school principalships and 1 percent of the superintendencies (Poll, 1978). Studies on women are replete with explanations of this underrepresentation, the causes of which may be categorized into internal and external barriers.

The internal barriers are based on the basic premise of role conflict, postulated by such social scientists as Merton and Parsons. Role conflict leads persons experiencing it to avoid such conflict by relinquishing one role. Darley (1976) pointed out that the qualities traditionally associated with the role of wife-mother and the role of career woman are incompatible, and thus lead to personal anxiety, social sanctions, and eventually to the avoidance of one role (usually the career, achievement oriented role), and the acceptance of the mother-wife role. If a woman does work, it will be just for "pin money," and there is no intention of moving up in the career ladder.

Another related internal barrier was what Hennig and Jardim (1977) described to be feminine personal qualities. Women lack aggressiveness and would rather wait to be chosen - discovered, invited, persuaded, asked to accept a promotion. Women describe themselves to be hesitant and to wait to be told what to do, reluctant to take risks and often lacking in self-

confidence as a career woman. These characteristics are best typified in the different responses of women and men to career opportunities. "Men ask, 'what's in it for me?'; women ask, 'can I measure up?'"

External barriers obstructing women's climb on the career ladder are associated with society's attitudes, systems, and structures. In a review by Shakeshaft (1979) of barriers to women aspiring for administrative school positions she listed factors included in certain studies which were found to be related to success (or lack of it), such as too few role models, lack of sponsorship, resentment by others, family responsibilities, and perceptions of female characteristics and abilities as being incongruent with job demands. Specific findings were illustrated by Neidig (1973), who described the paternalistic attitude of male board members, believing the "old boy" network among men was also emphasized as missing among women, and contributing to women's difficulty in career movement.

During the past two decades federal legislation helped reduce external barriers encountered by women in their careers and in other aspects of their personal lives, such as in applying for credit or entrance to medical school. Through feminist networks and feminist programs, women bolstered their confidence in themselves. They also contributed to a better understanding of themselves as women through their published works. In fact, the "information explosion" of recent years has been characterized by the proliferation of popular literature on women. More important, there has been a marked increase in the scholarly and basic research about women, and in the formation of numerous and complex networks of communication and mutual support (Silver, 1977). Womens programs and womens studies centers sprouted in college and university campuses. Not only did these centers offer courses, some sponsored special training opportunities to women in the form of conferences, institutes, and seminars for professional growth.

Training programs have also been conducted by private organizations for career oriented women aspiring for upward career mobility, primarily to assist them in developing themselves and in overcoming societal barriers pertinent to their field of work. The American Association of School Administrators (AASA), being committed to equal opportunity for women, obtained a grant from Ford Foundation in 1977 to conduct workshops to help women advance professionally by using strategies to overcome internal and external barriers to obtaining an administrative position. Of the 600 applicants, 75 women were selected and trained. Sixty of the trainees had doctoral degrees, 28 were assistant superintendents, 15 were principals, and the rest held administrative positions in education.

Research Objectives

In this paper we sought to identify the long term effects of the AASA training program on the upward mobility of the 75 women trainees. In addition, we investigated the relationship between personal and professional characteristics, job seeking strategies, and barriers encountered, with upward career mobility.

Sample and Procedures

The total sample in this study consist of the AASA trainees and a comparative group of non-AASA trainees, each of whom expressed a desire for upward career mobility during the period before the workshops were held and a few months after the training. Data on all the 75 AASA trainees were included in the study. The comparative sample consists of 32 non-trainees (41 were originally sent the questionnaire). Eighteen of the non-trainees were

alternates to the training workshops. The rest of the non-trainees were selected from a list of women who had sent their resumes and written to AASA, seeking assistance in their careers.

Two sources of data were used in the study:

(1) The questionnaire, which was used to obtain data on personal characteristics (age, ethnicity, marital status, number and ages of children); professional background (present position, education, expertise); internal and external barriers encountered in their careers, prior to and after the AASA training; strategies used to overcome these barriers; as well as characteristics of the districts where the women had applied for positions.

(2) The resumes submitted by the sample women four years ago. From these resumes, the women's qualifications were evaluated on the basis of six criteria. These are the same criteria which were used in the original selection of the AASA trainees:

1. present position and responsibilities
2. future aspirations in administration
3. clarity of expression
4. types of job experiences
5. letters of reference
6. evidence of opportunities for making presentations

On a scale of 1 to 5, ratings were given to each person in the sample,

Data Analysis

Initially, background information on the sample women were analyzed to determine the differences between the personal and professional characteristics of the AASA-trainees and non-trainees. Their resume ratings, the barriers they encountered before the training and today, and the career strategies they used during the intervening period, were also examined for similarities and differences.

As regards measuring upward career mobility, various criteria were employed. One criterion was whether the person has been promoted to the superintendency. Not one of the women was a superintendent four years ago, but approximately 15 percent now hold the position. Another criterion used was an assigned career growth rating, derived by comparing the women's positions with that of four years ago. For example, if a person's present position were one level higher than her position four years ago, she would be given a career growth rating of two. Those who did not move from their previous position to a higher level position were given a rating of one. A third criterion was the type of position held by the person at the present time, whether it is the assistant superintendency, the superintendency, an administrative positon in the federal government, or an administrative position in private industry. Descriptive statistics, t-tests, and regression were use for the above mentioned analyses.

Results

Characteristics Of The Sample

The majority of the women (90%) are between 36 and 55 years of age. Approximately half of the sample are between 36 to 45. Their ethnic composition include 75 white, 22 black, and the rest of other ethnic backgrounds. Fifty-six are married, and the rest are single, divorced or

widowed. A third of the sample women have no children. About half have one to three children, with 30 having children below 18 years of age. There are no significant differences between the AASA trainees and the non-trainees in the above characteristics.

Professional Qualifications Of The Sample

Eighty five percent of the sample women have doctoral degrees in education, with expertise in administration. Again, the AASA-trainees and the non-trainees do not differ in their level of education. Differences are revealed in the ratings given to both groups on present position and responsibilities, administrative aspirations, clarity of expression, and types of job experiences. As expected, the AASA trainees have higher ratings on these. The two groups' ratings do not vary in terms of letters of reference, nor in the evidence of opportunities for making presentations (see Table 1).

Barriers Encountered In Upward Career Mobility

There are no differences between the two groups, trainees and non-trainees, in the degree of internal barriers encountered before training. They expressed either no barriers, or only somewhat/sometimes, with regard to role conflicts, lack of assertiveness, lack of self-confidence, reluctance to take risk, lack of motivation in pursuing career goals, or low professional perseverance in pursuing career goals. Similarly, the trainees and non-trainees do not show any distinguishable change regarding these barriers over the four-year period.

However, the responses to questions on external barriers differentiate the trainees from the non-trainees. Although the two groups recall facing some external barriers four years ago, the AASA trainees said that they experience these external barriers to a lesser degree today.

The external barriers which the AASA trainees experience less today are lack of an influential sponsor, characteristics and abilities incongruent with job demands, lack of professional network, and conflict with husband's careers. Both groups still express the same degree of difficulty today on lack of female role models, lack of support and encouragement from peers, lack of support and encouragement from family, and employers negative attitudes towards women.

In summary, the internal barriers faced by AASA trainees and non-trainees are not significantly different, and did not undergo any change during the four year period starting from the time the training workshops were conducted for the AASA trainees. On the other hand, although both AASA trainees and non-trainees encountered external barriers to the same degree four years ago, the AASA trainees expressed some change, and view less external barriers to themselves today (see Table 2).

Strategies Used For Upward Career Mobility

Questions were posed to the women regarding the strategies they used to overcome barriers to upward career mobility. Both AASA trainees and non-trainees used strategies to about the same degree, whether these be in their personal lives, in job seeking, during the interview, or after the interview (see Table 3).

Factors Related To Upward Career Mobility

In order to determine the factors related to upward career mobility, regression methods were used. As mentioned earlier, three criteria were used to measure upward career mobility. The career growth criterion is a continuous variable, thus the general linear model, as provided in the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) procedure, was utilized. For the dichotomous criterion variable (superintendent or non-superintendent) and type

of position criterion (which may be considered a nominal variable) the SAS stepwise discriminant analysis procedure was employed.

In both the general linear model and discriminant analysis procedures, the effects on the criterion that were due to the professional qualifications ratings, i.e. types of job experiences, of the the AASA trainees and non-trainees (and where differences were evident) were partialed out first. Consequently, the relationship between the AASA training and the criterion variables could be independently evaluated. The variables were also entered into the regression models according to their chronological order of occurrence.

There are at least four predictor variables whose contribution to the dependent variable, career growth, are statistically significant ($p \leq .05$). These are age (which understandably has an inverse relationship with career growth), and ratings on administrative aspirations, clarity of expression, and types of job experiences. Ratings on clarity of expression and types of job experiences are more strongly related to mobility than the rating on administrative aspirations. The rest of the predictor variables, in the order of the magnitude of their contribution to the career growth criterion, are: marital status, ethnicity, reference letters rating, AASA training, rating on evidence of opportunities for making presentations, external barriers encountered, rating on position and responsibilities, number of children, strategies used in job seeking, internal barriers encountered, and whether there were children below 18. The incremental sums of squares of each variable in this group contribute to the prediction of career growth, but individually fail to reach statistical significance. The variance explained by all the variables of the model in the dependent variable amount to 37 per cent ($p=.003$) (see Table 4).

Somewhat different results were obtained when type of position was used as a criterion for upward career mobility. Two variables were found to have a strong relationship with the type of position the sample women now hold. Not surprisingly, the sample women's position and responsibilities ratings (based on their resumes four years ago) have the most influence on the type of position they presently occupy. The common variance between the two amounted to 24 percent. The second most dominant variable which influence the type of position the women presently hold is whether they are AASA trainees or non-trainees. AASA training has a common variance of 12 percent with present type of position. To clarify this result, it should be noted that approximately 10 per cent of the AASA trainees moved to private industry as corporate managers, or in some other administrative capacity. On the other hand, only one (.3 percent) of the non-AASA trainees moved to private industry. An additional 12 percent of the AASA trainees left school administration to become university professors, be top administrators in educational agencies, or hold high positions in the federal government. None of the non-trainees moved to either of the latter types of positions (see Table 5).

A new twist in the behavior of the variables is seen when the superintendency is used as a criterion in the discriminant analysis. Reference letters ratings, and the degree to which women encountered internal barriers, become statistically significant predictors. However, the correlation of these two variables with obtaining a superintendency is not as strong as the correlation of AASA training with the type of position presently held by the sample women (see Table 6).

A caveat is necessary in interpreting the results. The group of women in the study are quite homogeneous in terms of their education, the degree to which they encountered internal barriers, and the strategies they used in their quest for upward career mobility. This homogeneity should explain why such variables as education did not show a statistically significant relationship with any of the criteria for upward career mobility. The measures of upward career mobility that were used were in their nature also unrefined. Refinements, or the development of more accurate measures, would be a big step in achieving more accurate research in this area.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The AASA training decreased the degree to which the trainees face external barriers in their search for upward career mobility. The change in external barriers faced by these women is particularly true with respect to lack of an influential sponsor, personal characteristics and abilities incongruent with job demands, and a lack of a professional network.
2. The AASA training paved the way to career change, as evidenced by the move of approximately 22 percent of the trainees to other occupations outside of school district administration.
3. Clarity of expression and types of job experiences, as rated from the sample women's resumes, are strongly related to career growth, as measured by the number of higher level positions attained in the past four years.
4. Women who are rated highly on the basis of their letters of reference, and those who encounter less internal barriers tend to obtain the superintendency.

Recommendations

1. Organizations such as AASA should provide women with a support system to assist them in their career efforts by providing information on jobs, training, and other career opportunities, while at the same time providing them with the institutional and moral support they need.

2. Women in school administration should be made aware that there are opportunities open to them outside of school administration, and that their skills are transferable to other fields. Some women realize at midstream that the superintendency, which is the apex of a career in school administration, is not for them, thus stunting their career development.

3. Training opportunities should be provided for women who are still starting their careers in education. There are teachers, for example, who could not even reach the administrator level because of the barriers they face. Careful selection and training of aspiring women teachers with potential will produce long term benefits for sex equity in educational administration.

Table 1

Professional Qualifications Ratings of
AASA Trainees and Non-Trainees

Professional Characteristics	Trainees		Non-Trainees		Range of Values	p-Value for t-test
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
Education	3.8	.4	3.7	.6	1-4	.45
Position & Responsibilities	4.1	.4	3.6	.6	2-5	.0001
Administrative Aspirations	4.2	.5	3.9	.4	2-5	.01
Clarity of Expression	4.2	.4	3.7	.5	2-5	.0001
Types of Job Experiences	4.2	.4	3.6	.4	2-5	.0001
References	4.3	.5	4.3	.4	2-5	.93
Opportunities for Presentations	4.0	.6	3.8	.6	2-5	.11

Table 2

Internal and External Barriers Faced by
AASA Trainees and Non-Trainees

Barriers	Trainees Mean	Trainees S.D.	Non-Trainees Mean	Non-Trainees S.D.	Range of Values	p-Value for t-test
Internal Barriers Faced Four Years Ago	9.9	2.7	9.8	2.6	7-20	.87
Internal Barriers Faced Today	8.5	1.7	8.8	1.8	7-14	.53
External Barriers Faced Four Years Ago	13.6	3.2	14.6	2.7	8-20	.18
External Barriers Faced Today	11.5	2.4	14.0	3.0	8-19	.001

Table 3

Strategies Used By Sample Women to
Overcome Barriers to Upward Career Mobility

Strategies	Trainees		Non-Trainees		Range of Values	p-Value for t-test
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
Changes in Personal Life	7.4	1.0	7.5	.7	4-8	.64
Job Seeking	13.4	2.8	13.2	2.7	7-18	.73
Interviewing	11.3	1.0	10.8	1.6	7-12	.15
After the Interview	4.1	1.3	4.3	1.1	2-6	.63
Total	36.7	4.1	36.4	4.2	27-44	.79

Table 4

General Linear Model Results Using
Career Growth as Dependent Variable

SOURCE	DF	SUM OF SQUARES	MEAN SQUARE	F VALU
MODEL	21	36.60982484	1.74332499	2.3
ERROR	84	61.92791101	0.73723704	PR >
CORRECTED TOTAL	105	98.53773585		0.003

R-SQUARE	C.V.	STD DEV	
0.371531	44.3972	0.85862508	1.93396226

SOURCE	DF	SS	F VALUE	PR > F
Age	1	6.89180672	9.35	0.0030
Ethnicity	4	3.17588793	1.08	0.3732
Marital Status	3	3.89334945	1.76	0.1594
Number of Children	1	0.37821273	0.51	0.4758
With Children Below 18	1	0.03263110	0.04	0.8339
Education	1	0.37484309	0.51	0.4778
Position & Responsibilities Rtg.	1	0.79782000	1.08	0.3012
Administrative Aspirations Rtg.	1	2.82183633	3.83	0.0537
Facility of Expression Rating	1	6.10559112	8.28	0.0051
Experiences Rating	1	5.06123743	6.87	0.0104
References Rating	1	2.46408735	3.34	0.0711
Presentation Rating	1	1.43487518	1.95	0.1667
AASA Training	1	1.92517104	2.61	0.1099
Internal Barriers	1	0.03390149	0.05	0.8307
External Barriers	1	0.98615981	1.34	0.2507
Use of Strategies	1	0.23241406	0.32	0.5760

Table 5

Discriminant Analysis Results Using
Present Type of Position as Dependent Variable

STEPWISE SELECTION: STEP 1

STATISTICS FOR ENTRY, DF = 6,96

Variable	R**2	F	PROB > F	TOLERANCE
Age	0.0116	0.188	0.9795	1.0000
Number of Children	0.0316	0.522	0.7907	1.0000
With Chil. Below 18	0.1079	1.936	0.0827	1.0000
Education	0.0450	0.754	0.6076	1.0000
Position & Resp.Rtg	0.2443	5.173	0.0001	1.0000
Adm. AspirationsRtg	0.0357	0.592	0.7357	1.0000
Facility of Ex.Rtg.	0.1792	3.493	0.0036	1.0000
Experiences Rating	0.1890	3.728	0.0022	1.0000
References Rating	0.0948	1.676	0.1352	1.0000
Presentation Rating	0.0601	1.024	0.4147	1.0000
AASA Training	0.2218	4.560	0.0004	1.0000
Internal Barriers	0.0837	1.461	0.1999	1.0000
External Barriers	0.0650	1.113	0.3607	1.0000
Use of Strategies	0.0450	0.753	0.6084	1.0000

MULTIVARIATE STATISTICS

WILKS' LAMBDA = 0.75566459 F(6,96) = 5.173
PROB > F =0.0001

PILLAI'S TRACE = 0.244335 F(6,96) = 5.173
PROB > F =0.0001

AVERAGE SQUARED CANONICAL CORRELATION = 0.04072257

STEPWISE SELECTION: SUMMARY

STEP	VARIABLE ENTERED	VARIABLE REMOVED	NUMBER IN	PARTIAL R**2	F STATISTIC	PROB > F
1	Pos.&Resp. Rtg.		1	0.2443	5.173	0.0001
2	AASA Training		2	0.1250	2.263	0.0438

Table 6

Discriminant Analysis Results Using
the Attainment of the Superintendency as Dependent Variable

STEPWISE SELECTION: STEP 1

STATISTICS FOR ENTRY, DF = 1,105

Variable	R**2	F	PROB > F	TOLERANCE
Age	0.0020	0.210	0.6477	1.0000
Number of Children	0.0012	0.122	0.7277	1.0000
With Chil. Below 18	0.0111	1.183	0.2792	1.0000
Education	0.0122	1.293	0.2580	1.0000
Position & Resp. Rtg.	0.0375	4.090	0.0457	1.0000
Adm. Aspirations Rtg.	0.0068	0.717	0.3989	1.0000
Facility of Exp. Rtg.	0.0444	4.879	0.0294	1.0000
Experiences Rating	0.0302	3.267	0.0735	1.0000
References Rating	0.0757	8.596	0.0041	1.0000
Presentation Rating	0.0099	1.050	0.3078	1.0000
AASA Training	0.0106	1.121	0.2921	1.0000
Internal Barriers	0.0355	3.866	0.0519	1.0000
External Barriers	0.0257	2.772	0.0989	1.0000
Use of Strategies	0.0044	0.462	0.4984	1.0000

MULTIVARIATE STATISTICS

WILKS' LAMBDA = 0.92432581 F(1,105) = 8.596
PROB > F =0.0041

PILLAI'S TRACE = 0.075674 F(1,105) = 8.596
PROB > F =0.0041

AVERAGE SQUARED CANONICAL CORRELATION = 0.07567419

STEPWISE SELECTION: SUMMARY

STEP	VARIABLE ENTERED	REMOVED	NUMBER IN	PARTIAL R**2	F STATISTIC	PROB > F
1	Ref. Rtg.		1	0.0757	8.596	0.0041
2	Internal Bar.		2	0.0549	6.042	0.0156

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